

State grants program. Unfortunately, this amounts to matching only 38.4% of expected state expenditures on safety, down from 40% appropriated for FY 2007 and 42.1% for FY 2006.

Adequate appropriations are essential to carry out the expanded State safety programs. A positive step toward this goal is an appropriation for FY 2008 that will start with a 60% match, namely \$31.3 million, for state funds being expended in 2008, plus \$2.5 million for excavation damage prevention and One-Call grants. We are concerned about the safety of our citizens should States find it necessary to retrench in the face of inadequate Federal funding.

I would be glad to answer any questions on the States' role in ensuring the safety of our citizens and the energy reliability for continued economic growth of our Nation.

Sincerely,



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